

Give an account of a myth that attempted to address one of the great questions of life. In doing so, identify the ancient culture from which the myth originated and the questions the myth sought to answer. (20m)

The myth of Prometheus attempts to address the mystery of the origin of man. This ancient Greek myth told the story of Prometheus and the journey in which he travelled to bring fire to Man. The Goddess Athena crossed her father by telling Prometheus about an unguarded back door to Mount Olympus. Zeus, Athena's father, did not want man kind to have fire because of the success and benefits it would bring. Prometheus covertly entered Mount Olympus and lit a torch from the sun. He took a piece of lighting charcoal then extinguished the fire and carried the coal in a fennel stalk so that they would remain hidden. He journeyed back to earth and gave fire to humanity.

When Zeus discovered what had happened, he sought vengeance. He combined the power of gods and goddesses to create Pandora and her box, which contained all of mankind's horrors. Zeus attempted to disguise this as a gift to Prometheus, however he had the gift of foresight and was able to reject the box as he saw its curse. After some time, Pandora opens the opens the box because she is overcome with curiosity. In doing so she unleashes all of the horrors on mankind such as vice, passion, insanity and labour. However the box also releases hope.

This myth could have been used to answer many mysteries in ancient times, such as the origin of fire. It may also have been used to explain how mankind began as Prometheus crafted clay figures that Athena later breathe life into, thus explaining humanity's origins. The myth also explains that the reason evil exists in the world is because of Pandora and her box.